
National Rules – The Competition

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Veterans must be enrolled to receive care at a VA medical facility before entering a local competition. This facility should be the site where he/she receives their primary care. He/she can submit an entry in creative writing, dance, drama or music categories with a Veteran or group from another VA facility, but still represents and must go through his/her originating VA facility to enter the competition. Veterans are only permitted to enter through one VA facility competition each year.
2. Each Veteran must work with a VA staff person from the VA facility at which he/she receives his/her primary treatment to submit entries into the competition.
3. VA staff must submit their local facility first place entries to the Competition Portal no later than **Friday, October 1, 2021** for Veterans to be eligible to compete at the national level.
4. The entry forms in this handbook should be used to gather the necessary information for each entry. Staff should retain the entry forms and the necessary consent forms for reference and verification purposes as needed. Each division has entry forms that are specific for their division. Please use the forms provided in this handbook to make copies as needed.
5. A 10-3203 form (Consent for Production and Use of Verbal or Written Statements, Photographs, Digital Images, and/or Video or Audio Recordings by VA) must be completed and signed by every Veteran entering the local and national level of competition. These forms should not be sent to the national chairpersons. VA staff contact persons should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.
6. Entries created/recorded/written by Veterans who have passed away prior to the national deadline of October 1, 2021 are not eligible to be submitted to the national level of competition.
7. Veterans may only submit one entry per category.
8. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three art categories and one group category in the art division. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three creative writing categories in the creative writing division. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three solo categories and three group categories in the dance, drama and music divisions.

9. Veterans may not expand the number of their entries in any one division using a different name (for example: pen names, stage names, different artist names, etc.).
 10. A single entry may not be submitted into two or more categories within the same division. It is acceptable however for an entry to be submitted into multiple divisions if the rules are followed for each division.
 11. Send only the first-place winners from your competition. Only one entry for each category will be accepted from a VA facility.
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National Rules – The Competition (continued)

12. First-place ties in a category at the local competition MUST be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility. A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.
13. Veterans who have received a gold medal in the same category from any of the 5 divisions (art, creative writing, dance, drama, and music) for two consecutive years must enter a different category the third year. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the entry being disqualified.
14. Veterans may not enter the same art, creative writing, dance, drama and music entry again after it has won first-place nationally. Failure to comply with this rule will result in disqualification of the entry. Additionally, Veterans should be encouraged to enter new material each year.
15. References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that requires a write-up.
16. Veterans in national first, second and third place groups of up to five in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music will each be presented a medal. Groups of 6 or more will be presented a medal if possible or will be provided an award certificate. Non-Veterans and Veterans serving as accompanists, or dance partners, or dramatic readers that enhance an entry will not receive medals or certificates.
17. Prior to submitting entries in the competition, eligible Veterans who are also VA employees should discuss leave options/restrictions with their supervisor in the event they might be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

18. **Final results of each of the five divisions of competition will be sent via E-mail to VA staff contact persons by mid-December.**

Art Division

- All artwork entered (except for the Military Combat Experience, category 14) must have been completed after April 1, 2020.
- Art entries must be submitted as digital .JPEG images. Do not submit the actual art or photographs of the art as they will be disqualified.
- All Veterans who place first at the national level in the art division of the competition will be invited to the Festival.
- Following the national judging, the first-place pieces from each art division category should be shipped to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival host VA facility location (2022 – Bay Pines VA Healthcare System). Entries that are extremely fragile may not be shipped and will instead be displayed in the Festival art exhibit as a poster image.

National Rules – The Competition (continued)

Creative Writing Division

- Entries in the creative writing division must have been completed after April 1, 2020.
- Creative Writing entries must be submitted as Word documents. Do not send PDF documents or documents with graphics.
- All Veterans who place first at the national level in the creative writing division of the competition will be invited to the Festival.

Dance, Drama, and Music Divisions

- Entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2020.
- Dance, drama and music entries must be video recorded and submitted as MP4, .WMV, or .MOV files. (VOB files will not be accepted.)
- Entry length should be approximately 3 minutes. The national competition judges suggest WOWING them in the first 3 minutes. Entry content that continues longer than 3 minutes may not be viewed.

- Music entries must be recorded live. No voice-over dubbing will be allowed. No lip syncing to a pre-recorded track will be allowed.
- TITLE PAGE – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.
- Entries submitted on CDs will still be allowed. Be sure to label the CDs sent to each division (dance, drama, and music) chairperson. Label the CD with the **city and state of your VA facility**. Also include the **division and category number**. Separate CDs are still required for each entry.

For example: St. Cloud, MN - Music Division - Cat. 1

- All Veterans who place first at the national level in the dance, drama, and music division of the competition will be invited to the Festival.

***The national chairpersons and judges of the competitions reserve the right to disqualify an entry if the above rules are not followed.**

National Rules – The Festival

1. Following the national judging, Veterans invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) will be notified by their VA staff contact person. **Veterans who are invited and accept the invitation must submit all required Festival registration forms to the host site of the NVCAF no later than February 1, 2022.**
2. **Funding support and arrangements for travel to and from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for Veterans invited to attend the NVCAF is the responsibility of the local VA facility.** Lodging, meals and ground transportation during the Festival will be provided through national Festival funds. These expenses will be provided for up to 5 eligible Veterans invited in the Group Art category and Creative Writing Special Recognition category and up to 5 eligible Veterans invited in the group categories of the dance, drama, and music divisions.

3. Stage show performance costumes for winning acts invited to the Festival will be the responsibility of the Veterans. Male participants will be requested to bring black pants, black shoes, black belt, and a white collared, long-sleeve dress shirt. Other production number costumes such as vests, ties, etc., will be provided. Women participants will be provided a Festival chorus dress and will be asked to bring black shoes.
4. Veterans who are invited to the Festival must be prepared (either themselves or through their VA staff contact person) to send an E-mail including the lyrics for music and dance and words/narration for drama entries in order for this text to be placed in the show script. E-mails can be sent to Suzanne.Anderson4@va.gov.
5. **NO GLASS PROTECTIVE LAYER (on flat art) MAY BE USED WHEN SHIPPING NATIONAL FIRST PLACE ARTWORK TO THE FESTIVAL. PLEXIGLAS MUST BE USED INSTEAD.** Artwork placed under protective glass and shipped to the NVCAF host VA facility will forfeit their placement in the national competition due to the risk of potential injury to persons unpacking the piece and potential damage to the artwork.
6. Veterans who are invited to the Festival and accept the invitation to attend must commit to participating fully in the Festival week to the best of their ability. This includes all workshops, seminars, rehearsals, outings, exhibitions, stage show performance, etc.